

# GENESIS 1-24

Genesis gives answers to basic questions:

- Who is God?
- Why did everything get here?
- Why were human beings created?
- What are evil and sin?
- How do God and human beings interact?
- Will God punish or rescue?

Genesis 1-11 are the chapters of prehistory. Dates, specific individuals and events are obscured in the mists of time. These stories are about God's goals and intentions and what it means to be human.

Both the first-time reader and the person returning to well-known stories will benefit by approaching these chapters with these questions:

1. What does this tell me about God's character?
2. What does this tell me about the nature of human beings?

## Insights for reading chapters 1-11

CHAPTER 1 – Creation

- What does God call good and very good?

CHAPTERS 2 & 3 – Human Creation/Human Sin

- *Adam* means “earth creature.” It is a name for humankind repeated again in Genesis 5:1-2. The word for ground – “adamah” – is found in the description of human creation in chapter 2 and the punishments for sin in chapter 3.
- *Eve* means the “mother of all living.”
- In chapter 2:25, they are naked and not ashamed, but in 3:8 and 10 they are naked and ashamed/afraid.

CHAPTER 4 – Cain and Abel

CHAPTER 5 – Adam's Genealogy

- Pay attention to the ages of the people in this list of fathers and sons. What happens as time goes on?
- Have you heard about the man who never died? Verses 21-24 tell about Enoch who

“walked away with God.”

CHAPTERS 6-9 – Noah and the Flood

- Who and what are punished? Who is saved? Why?
- Note the changes, the promises, the ground rules which God lays out in chapter 9.
- See chapter 3 about nakedness.

CHAPTERS 10 & 11 – Table of Nations and the Tower of Babel

- This list of the descendants of Noah is more than a genealogy. Many of the names are plural. This names the peoples and nations in the Middle East and around the Mediterranean world at the time of Abraham.

## The Abraham Chapters

Chapters 12 and following bring us into known human history. Abraham receives God's promise. We follow the ups and downs as Abraham and his wife Sarah wait to see what God is doing to fulfill that promise. Yet their story is bigger than their individual lives. This is really about God's plan to restore the good order of creation disrupted by sin. God chooses a specific family, a particular people to bring blessing to all people. We read these chapters knowing that Jesus is the blessing of blessings.

## Use these questions as you read

What is God's promise to Abraham?

- Land
- Descendants
- All families of earth blessed through you

How is the promise renewed and restated?

How do Abraham and his family show faith in God and God's promise?

What are the obstacles to God's promise which they encounter or perceive?

How do they try to get around the obstacles?

How do their plans work out?

How does God fulfill his promises for them?